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## BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

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*Economic Beginnings of the Far West; How We Won the Land beyond the Mississippi.* By KATHERINE COMAN. New York: Macmillan, 1912. Two vols. 8vo, illustrated. Pp. xix+418; ix+450. \$4.00 net.

To bring together, in two short volumes, the three hundred years' history of the empire west of the Mississippi River would seem to be baffling for even the four years which Miss Coman devoted to this research. She did the work on the ground and with the original materials. And she has done it well; for she has set before herself, not diplomacy, politics, and wars, but the homely problem: How did the self-employed and self-supporting farmer, with his American ideals of free land, free labor, and free opportunity, eventually drive out his French, Spanish, Mexican, British, and even his own slave-owning country-men who had preceded him, and take possession of this richest portion of North America in advance of the wars, diplomacy, and treaties that merely ratified what he already had won?

Reduced to this statement of the survival of the fittest economy, the narrative, beginning with the explorers and colonizers of three hundred years ago, and ending with the railroad to the Pacific and the Homestead Act, is rightly described as three hundred years of "economic beginnings." It differs, on the one hand, from our customary histories, in that it is not a series of those thrilling adventures which excite the American youth, but a story of the inevitable conquest of the land through individual hardship and ambition, against the monopolistic and suppressive policies of other nations and the southern states. Even the two great monopolies of the fur trade, that of the Hudson Bay Company, granted openly by England, and that of Astor's first great American "trust," won through secret influences at Washington and unscrupulous competition in the fur country, are shown to have been both demoralizing to the traders and destructive to the business. Not until the home-seeking settlers succeeded them, did a virile nation arise. Miss Coman's earlier chapters are, of course, replete with stories of adventure and hardship, and individuals stand out rather than social classes. Indeed, the whole period is that of individualism, self-reliance,

and aggression, produced by free institutions, and opposing the sluggishness produced by monopolistic and paternal institutions. This history of it reveals both those heroic and adventurous individuals who come to the front, and those dependent pioneers and their rulers who give way.

The book differs from the usual industrial histories, concerned largely with the evolution of technique in industry and invention, in that it turns upon the characteristics of individuals produced by various institutions. It is, therefore, truly economic rather than industrial history. At the same time, these economic features differ entirely from those which we are accustomed to term "economic," since the period which Miss Coman has studied closes where the great movements of economic classes begin. Her individualistic farmers and laborers, after she leaves them, become grangers and trade unionists, when once the land is occupied and the railroads dominate. Her history is the struggle between free and paternal institutions. It is a most interesting and readable introduction to the struggle thereafter taking place within free institutions.

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"Publications de l'Institut Nobel Norvégien." Tome I, *L'Arbitrage international chez les Hellènes*. By A. RAEDER. Large 8vo, pp. 322. Tome II, Fasc. I, *Les bases économiques de la justice internationale*. By ACHILLE LORIA. Large 8vo, pp. 96. New York: Putnam, 1912.

The Nobel Institute of Norway is the official organ of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee. To further its own activities in behalf of international peace, the committee has inaugurated the publication of a series of scientific studies bearing upon arbitration and kindred themes.

The first volume of the series deals with arbitration among the ancient Greek states. This is a historical study based upon inscriptions which have been discovered from time to time and intermittently published. The period covered by the study extends from the seventh to the second century before the Christian era. These records, in the form in which the author presents them, give a fairly adequate though not an entirely complete idea of the extent to which arbitration was employed in settling international disputes among the Greek states of antiquity.